

BRITISH DIPLOMACY BEFORE 1914
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G. I resent that criticism. After Germany refused the Conference, I could not put pressure on Russia. She was far less prepared for war than Germany. If I had tried to hold back her military preparations, Sazonoff would at once have said: Then will you help us if war comes ? It was for Germany to hold back Austria, who was her ally, and to whom therefore she had a right to speak. She should have pressed Berchtold to accept the Conference.

J. She dared not do so. The German Government did not want war, but it had given Austria *carte blanche* and could not regain control of the situation. And it was genuinely afraid of losing its only dependable ally. The Austrians did not want a patched up settlement with Servia, and they had such bitter memories of the Ambassadors' Conference during the Balkan wars that they would not look at the idea. This was thoroughly understood at Berlin.

G. I agree that neither the Kaiser nor Bethmann nor Jagow wanted war. But why should they be afraid of losing Austria ? What could she do ?

L. Germany was convinced that the Alliance was at stake if she declined to play up, and she dreaded isolation.

RUSSIA

I. Many writers, here and abroad, while fully recognizing your desire for peace, argue that you allowed our friends to make the pace. We were a satiated Power; they were not. We had indeed made up our quarrels with them, but in doing so we got mixed up in their quarrels with other people.

G. That is only partially true. We should never have supported France in aggression.

I. Of course not, and she knew it. But she was tied to Russia, who was both ambitious and untrustworthy.

G. Russia was like a big ship without a rudder. There was no real control. Think of Hartwig at Teheran. War was

not inevitable in 1914, but it was almost inevitable some time
on account of
the state of Europe with its balance of power,
alliances and armaments. That is why I am so keen on the League,
Locarno, and
disarmament. It was a very bad mistake to attribute
the whole
responsibility for the war to the Central Powers in
the Treaty of
Versailles, as I have said in the Preface to the cheap
edition of my
book.